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Personal - Questions for Senator Mansfield

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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QUESTIONS FOR SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

Submitted by Ray Kosanke, November 5, 1973

1. What future do you foresee for NATO?
2. Do you feel Europe is pulling its fair share for its own defense?
3. What number of U.S. troops in Europe do you feel is reasonable?
4. If the U.S. withdraws substantial numbers of troops, does Europe as a group of individual nation-states have a creditable defense? On what basis would their defense be founded?
5. What are the possibilities for NATO without U.S. participation?
6. Do you favor turning over more responsibility to the Europeans for their own defense? Would this include selling or giving them a nuclear deterrent?
7. How does West Germany fit into this? Does the U.S. favor rearming it as the strongest nation, economically in West Europe? Would the U.S. allow West Germany to nuclearly rearm itself?
8. Do you feel NATO has a role in the Mid-East?
9. How do you see the energy (oil) problem affecting U.S. policy in Europe? Will the U.S. find itself trading oil for the U.S. nuclear umbrella?
10. Do you feel that the U.S. is losing credibility abroad due to the Watergate affair?
11. As I understand it, the McMahon Act--between the U.S. and Britain--runs out this year. Is the U.S. favoring Britain's sharing former nuclear secrets with its EEC allies?

Ray Kosanke
Regional Editor
Plain Truth Magazine
Ave. de la Joyeuse Entree, 41
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

(local Washington contact):

Dexter H. Faulkner
Regional Editor
Plain Truth Magazine
1395 National Press Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20004

phone: 262-8416

1. I think the countries that comprise NATO have common cultural bonds, strong economic ties and a continuing military commitment to each other. I believe these common interrelationships will be strengthened by permitting their evolution rather than freezing these relationships into the past. It is through such a process that the Atlantic Alliance can demonstrate a confident vitality and strength far superior to that obtained by clinging to yesterday's rhetoric and premises. NATO would be primarily the beneficiary of a changed attitude.

2. I believe Europeans are better able to perceive the magnitude of the threat from the East than are the Americans who are 3,000 miles away. So rather than judging whether the Europeans are not doing enough, I would rather conclude that the United States is doing too much; preparing for a contingency which is not real; preparing to fight a war based upon tactical premises of a generation ago.

I believe the Europeans can adjudge better than Americans the severity of the conventional threat and will allocate sufficient resources to meet that threat. Over the years of NATO the United States has been more faithful in living up to the agreed target levels for conventional forces than have other NATO countries. A relaxation by the United States of some conventional forces committed to Europe would be an adjustment consistent with that of other NATO countries.

3. The exact number of U.S. troops in Europe can be reduced significantly. I believe that one or two mobile divisions dispersed more fully along the entire central European border would be far more effective than the present stationing of 4 and 1/3 divisions primarily in southern Germany.

4. The removal of substantial numbers of U.S. forces from Europe would not collapse the common defense of Europe. Such rhetoric is a scare tactic. The options in Europe in the 1970's are not the fighting of an all out and exclusively conventional war or an immediate and all out nuclear war. Although these options are possible, each is extremely remote. The more likely contingency for which NATO can respond in the '70's is potential probe into one of the NATO countries which, if pursued, would eventually trigger a nuclear response from the United States. The use of conventional forces in Europe is to prepare for this eventuality and to provide a sufficient pause period prior to any engagement in Europe going nuclear. The conventional forces in Europe, therefore, are to provide the sufficient number of days to permit the defusing of the potentially nuclear conflict. The

United States can withdraw a substantial number of troops in Europe and still retain a most substantial number of troops in Europe sufficient in number to provide any cohesion for the NATO alliance as well as the necessary credible presence to assure a national commitment.

5. I personally do not envision NATO without U.S. participation. I believe the United States was a sincere and necessary partner in 1949 when the Treaty was ratified. I believe it demonstrated its sincerity and commitment in 1951 when it sent 4 and 1/3 divisions back to Europe to meet what was then perceived as an urgent threat from the East. I believe the United States demonstrated through this act as well as through the Marshall Plan that its commitment, motives and word are good. I believe that today the U.S. is fully committed to NATO and will continue to be committed to NATO but hopefully is not wed to the rhetoric of the past. The rigidity of the premises of the '50's should not prevent a wise expression of that commitment in the '70's. I believe the United States' international word and its willingness to fulfill its international commitments abroad, even those not made formally through treaties, cannot be questioned by any European country. The tragedy of the war in Southeast Asia is evidence of the American commitment and how far the United States will go to fulfill even questionable obligations abroad. I see no fear the United States will back out of its formal and highest obligation to the North Atlantic Alliance.

6. I do not believe it is necessary to sell or give nuclear weapons to any European countries. I don't believe the cause of world peace is served nor the interest of Europe is served by further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

7. I believe West Germany has demonstrated a greater understanding of the United States' desire to update its military manifestations in Europe. I believe the West Germans are very sensitive to the reactions their military expressions have in Europe--both East and West. I believe that the United States military presence in Western Germany could be reduced significantly and to provide to the West Germans a greater security of the United States' involvement ab initio by a more proper stationing and distribution of forces along the north German plain. I would hope that a wiser disposition of forces would not generate any great desire by any European country to increase armaments beyond the point currently perceived necessary to meet the threat from the East.

I have the highest confidence in Chancellor Willy Brandt and the Government of West Germany, and I am extremely hopeful that under his great leadership West Germany will ratify the Nonproliferation Treaty in the near future. The strong bridges of cooperation and friendship built to the East under the forward-looking policy of Chancellor Brandt's ostpolitik would be undermined by any nuclearization of West Germany's military forces.

I believe the great international sophistication of West Germany in taking these forward-looking steps would lead one to believe that no such nuclearization would be desired by West Germans since it would adversely affect the central role West Germany will play as the European community evolves in the decades ahead.

8. I don't believe NATO itself has a specific role in the present conflict in the Middle East. All NATO countries have varying degrees of dependency on oil from the Middle East which is presently being used as leverage by the oil-producing countries to implement their policies. I believe the oil-consuming countries collectively have an interest in the Middle Eastern area and its problems and collectively they agree on a common policy, but I do not think that NATO in and of itself has a direct responsibility to respond to the Middle Eastern crisis. There are other organizations of commonality that could be the forum through which these nations could speak with equal effectiveness.

9. I do not see an immediate effect on U.S. policy in Europe caused by the energy problem. I believe that the U.S. will have to adopt an overall energy policy which will stress limitation of consumption at home, research on potential new energy resources rather than seeking greater amounts of oil from abroad.

10. The Watergate affair has had dramatic impact at home, and I am sure to some degree affected credibility abroad. Those not familiar with the American form of government, however, and its three separate and equal branches equate the loss of credibility to weakness of the total government such as would occur in a parliamentary form of government. This is not the case in the United States. During these times of extraordinary stress on the Executive branch, the Congress has shown immense responsibility and stability, keen awareness of separation of domestic trouble from the necessities of governmental action in international affairs. Only in an American form of government could such a

continuum occur, and I believe history will judge well the viability of the American institutions after these present crises have been weathered.

11. I personally do not favor proliferation of any form of nuclear information that could be used to proliferate further a capacity to build nuclear weapons. The extension of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes I believe is desirable and warranted.